

As an International Coordinator of the Pirate Party Switzerland I visited the PP-EU Conference in Manchester on December 1st and 2nd.

As at the Barcelona conference there where many Pirate Parties present with their delegate, delegated to others or participated remotely.

Very little progress was achieved in the negotiations towards the foundation of a European Pirate Party. Not only where none of the major points tackled but some progress achieved in Barcelona may have been undone.

I have serious doubts as to whether a European Pirate Party can be founded before 2014 using this process. I also have my reservations about the effectiveness of such a construct, once established. The same concerns have been voice by delegates from other pirate parties.

Many thanks go to:

- Jack Alnutt for the organization of the event,
- The Pirate Party UK as gracious hosts.



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1 PP-EU Conference

The proceedings were organized even more hastily than in Barcelona. The agenda was only known one day in advance. The disarray can be partly attributed Julia Reda, who was designated chairwoman, suddenly taking ill and not being able to join the conference. But mostly the problem arises from a lack of communication between the involved pirate parties.

1.1 Discussion

The first day was overshadowed by three incidents. The morning began with a discussion about the participation of parties from non-nation states. The only such party present and accepted where the Catalan. Therefore this discussion was moot and mostly perceived as an unwarranted provocation and the respective motion was promptly rejected.

Second, it was decided with a narrow majority that PP-EU should have an arbitration body. As it turned out later, this was a red line for the UK delegation. Subsequent attempts at rendering this body moot failed. After lunch the UK delegation made clear their position and motioned to re-table the issue. This was rejected by a narrow majority.

The third event, later in the afternoon, was the renewed questioning of the wisdom of letting parties from non-EU countries take part. This was clearly aimed at eastern European pirate parties represented by delegates from Germany. It would also have meant exclusion of Switzerland as a non-EU country. The corresponding motion was rejected quite clearly.

On day two some progress was made on the board and council questions but none of the contested issues, such as voting weight, was tackled.



1.2 Foreign delegations

In the big picture, the appearance that the delegations from four eastern European pirate party to German pirates where improper cannot be avoided, regardless of whether or not they are, in fact, legitimate. Many delegates continue to see this as five German votes. The responses of the delegates from these eastern European countries to such allegations have not convinced anyone of their legitimacy. Even if these delegations are fully legitimate, no-one can get around the fact, that their speeches and votes are heavily influenced by German views.

The situation is aggravated by the number of German pirates present, which was a full third of all persons, and the fact that two of these unsuccessfully tried to claim another delegation for themselves, regardless of whether or not such a claim might be legitimate.

The insensitivity of German pirates, including ranking officials of the Pirate Party of Germany continues to derail these inherently delicate negotiations.

The only practical solution to such problems might be to require all delegates to have citizenship of or permanent residence in the county where the party they represent is based. This would, as a casualty, exclude all parties that do not have at least one English speaking person. But I would make sure that there is a minimum level of organization with all parties involved.

Another way would be working with formal recognition of parties as the United Nations do with nations. But in my opinion this would not work due to the overall immaturity of the pirate parties worldwide.

Therefore my recommendations are:

- That our international team work on a proposal to tackle these problems in the future, independent of the continuation of PP-EU negotiations.
- That our international team talk about such proposals with other like-minded pirate parties.

1.3 Progress, resources and perspectives

In my opinion the meeting has made it clear, that PP-EU will not be founded any time soon. And when it is founded it will likely turn into another infighting place similar to the Pirate Parties International.



Therefore one cannot ignore the prospect of failure of this process and must seriously ask whether our resources are well spent at these conferences, especially considering that the Pirate Party Switzerland would, being based outside the European Union, not profit in the same extent from the PP-EU.

I therefore recommend that:

- The PPS withdraws from the PP-EU meeting should any other major pirate party withdraw.
- The PPS seeks to intensify its contacts with like-minded pirate parties around the world to achieve tangible goals on a bilateral basis.



2 Journey and stay

The flight to Manchester with Swiss as well as the train ride to the city was without trouble. The Hotel, the Holiday Inn Express in Manchester city was acceptable but steeply priced as UK Hotels typically are.

The conference venue, a hacker space in the center of Manchester was easily reachable and well suited but a bit small. The Internet connection worked flawlessly.

The food at nearby restaurants was good but arrived sometimes late which might be attributed to the rather large group size. Socializing events contributed greatly to the understanding among some parties.

The return flight was rather bumpy and delayed because of foul weather but arrived safely on the ground.

